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ABSTRACT

This teaching packet serves as a unit by itself or as part of preparation unit for a visit to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery to see the exhibition "Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion." Focusing on Hindu religious objects found in an art museum, the packet suggests connections between art and world studies themes. In addition, these highly symbolic objects provide much material for discussion of the creation of images, whether in two or three dimensions, in speech, or in music. In this way, study of the objects provides a springboard for creativity in art, language arts, and music. This guide explains that puja is the act of showing reverence to a god, or to aspects of the divine, through invocations, prayers, songs, and rituals. An essential part of puja for the Hindu devotee is making a spiritual connection with a deity (often facilitated through an element of nature, a sculpture, a vessel, a painting, or a print). The guide's materials seek to give insight into Hindu pujas and to portray the role of art objects as links to the divine. Student learning objectives include to: (1) explain the basic beliefs of Hinduism; (2) identify several of the major Hindu gods and goddesses; (3) describe the practice of puja; (4) demonstrate an understanding of how objects are used in puja ceremonies; and (5) integrate concepts learned from the study of puja into other curriculum areas. (BT)

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GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

पूजा PUJA

Expressions of Hindu Devotion

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पूजा PUJA

Expressions of Hindu Devotion

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Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C.

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Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion

Puja is the act of showing reverence to a god or to aspects of the divine through invocations, prayers, songs, and rituals. An essential part of puja for the Hindu devotee is making a spiritual connection with a deity. Most often that contact is facilitated through an object: an element of nature, a sculpture, a vessel, a painting, or a print.

The goals of this packet are

- to give insight into Hindu pujas
- to portray the role of art objects as links to the divine

Students will be able to

- explain the basic beliefs of Hinduism
- identify several of the major Hindu gods and goddesses
- describe the practice of puja
- demonstrate an understanding of how objects are used in puja ceremonies
- integrate concepts learned from the study of puja into other curriculum areas

INTRODUCTION 6

How to Use This Packet

This packet may serve as a teaching unit by itself or as part of preparation for a visit to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery to see the exhibition *Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion.* The materials may be used by a single teacher or in collaboration with teachers of different disciplines. Focusing on Hindu religious objects found in an art museum, the packet suggests connections between art and world studies themes. In addition, these highly symbolic objects provide much material for discussion of the creation of images, whether in two or three dimensions, in speech, or in music. In this way, study of the objects provides a springboard for creativity in art, language arts, and music.

Contents of the packet

In addition to the written materials, this packet contains a video and three posters of Hindu deities. Suggestions for how to use these materials are listed in the section entitled "Activities for Students."

Videos

There are three video segments on one tape. The first segment, which is narrated, is repeated in an open-captioned version. It provides an introduction to the concept of puja, giving a useful overview of the practice of puja and how objects are used in puja ceremonies. The second is a short segment that shows a woman worshiping at her household shrine in India. It offers a more detailed look at the practice of puja in a Hindu home. The third segment focuses on people worshiping at an outdoor shrine to the goddess Chandi in Puri District in Orissa. It shows puja as it is practiced in a rural, outdoor shrine in India. All of the segments run continuously in the exhibition.

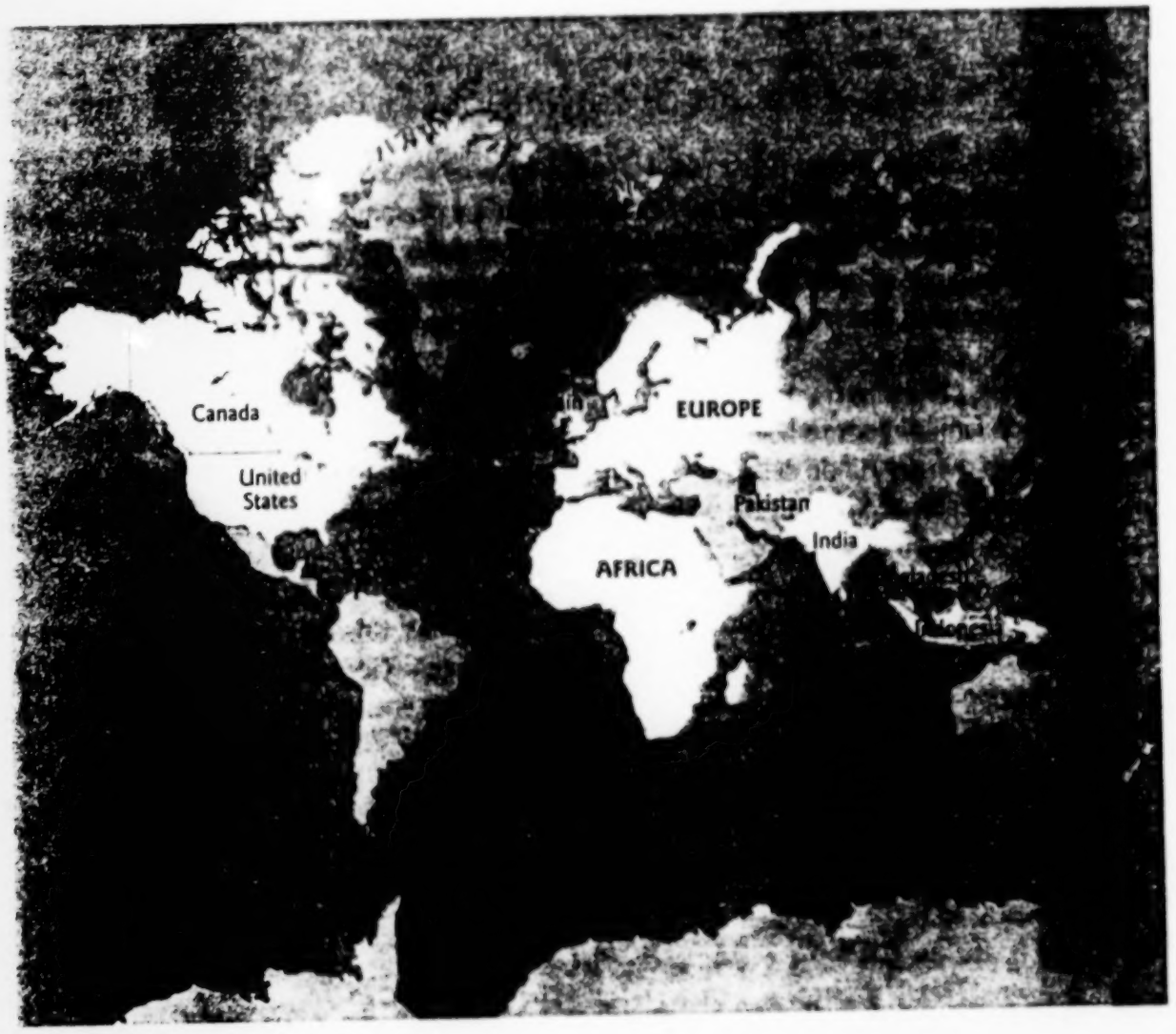
Posters of Hindu Deities

There are three posters of Hindu deities included with this packet. They depict

- the god Shiva, his wife, Parvati, and their son Ganesha
- the god Vishnu and his wife, Lakshmi
- the goddess Durga

Facts About Hinduism

- Hinduism is the world's third-largest religion, after Christianity and Islam.
- Today there are about 650 million Hindus worldwide.
- The majority of Hindus live in India, where the religion was born.
- One in every seven people in the world is a Hindu living in India.
- There are also significant Hindu minorities in Bangladesh and Pakistan, and smaller groups in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Fiji, Africa, Europe, Canada, and the United States.
- About three-quarters of a million Hindus live and work in the United States.
- While Hindus in each region have altered their religion to suit the needs of the surrounding culture, all Hindus share a common set of traditions.
- Hinduism was not founded by one individual. Rather, it is a fusion of many religious beliefs and philosophical schools. Accordingly, Hinduism is said to be a religion of a million and one gods.



THE MODERN HINDU WORLD

What is puja?

Puja is the act of showing reverence to a god, a spirit, or another aspect of the divine through invocations, prayers, songs, and rituals. An essential part of puja for the Hindu devotee is making a spiritual connection with the divine. Most often that contact is facilitated through an object: an element of nature, a sculpture, a vessel, a painting, or a print.

During puja an image or other symbol of the god serves as a means of gaining access to the divine. This icon is not the deity itself; rather, it is believed to be filled with the deity's cosmic energy. It is a focal point for honoring and communicating with the god. For the devout Hindu, the icon's artistic merit is important, but is secondary to its spiritual content. The objects are created as receptacles for spiritual energy that allow the devotee to experience direct communication with his or her gods.

What are the basic beliefs of Hinduism?

Most Hindus believe in an immense unifying force that governs all existence and cannot be completely known by humanity. Individual gods and goddesses are personifications of this cosmic force. In practice, each Hindu worships those few deities that he or she believes directly influence his or her life. By selecting one or more of these deities to worship, and by conducting the rituals designed to facilitate contact with them, a Hindu devotee is striving to experience his or her unity with that cosmic force.

While scholars, philosophers, and priests debate the finer points of Hindu theology, lay worshipers call upon familiar gods to help with their everyday hopes and problems.

There are three primary Hindu deities:

- Shiva (the Creator and Destroyer), who destroys the old while creating the new. His consorts include the loving Parvati and the ferocious Durga, who represent the feminine aspects of his complex nature.
- Vishnu (the Preserver) and his two most popular incarnations, Krishna and Rama.
- Devi (the Protecting Mother), sometimes known simply as the Goddess, who appears in some form in every region of India. She is often identified as the creative energy of the universe, and is considered by her followers the equal of Vishnu and Shiva.

Many worshipers pay homage to local manifestations of these gods.

What are the origins of Hinduism?

Hinduism was born in India, but it was not founded by one individual. Rather, it is the fusion of many religious beliefs and philosophical schools. Accordingly, Hinduism is said to be a religion of a million and one gods. Its origins are mixed and complex.

One strand can be traced to the Vedas, the sacred literature written in Sanskrit between 1200 and 1000 B.C. by Aryan people. The Aryans were Indo-European groups who trickled steadily into the Indian subcontinent between 1800 and 1200 B.C. (In Sanskrit *arya* means "noble.") They brought with them a group of sacred hymns known as the Vedas ("knowledge"), composed in the ancient Sanskrit language in praise of deities who were often personifications of the natural elements. Another strand of Hinduism drew on the beliefs prevalent among groups of indigenous people in India, especially their faith in the power of the Mother Goddess and in the efficacy of fertility symbols.

Hinduism in its present-day form emerged at the start of the Christian era. The three most popular deities of modern Hinduism are the god Shiva, the god Vishnu, and the goddess Devi. Hindus generally address their worship to one of these three deities or their manifestations.

Why are there so many different gods and goddesses?

The presence of so many different gods is often puzzling to non-Hindus. Hindus suggest that one may view the divine force as a diamond with innumerable facets; each deity is one of these facets. One or another of the facets may have particular significance and appeal to an individual. By acknowledging the power of an individual facet, however, the believer does not deny the existence of others. On the contrary, Hindus affirm the existence of many aspects of the divine.

Why are there so many different forms of the deities?

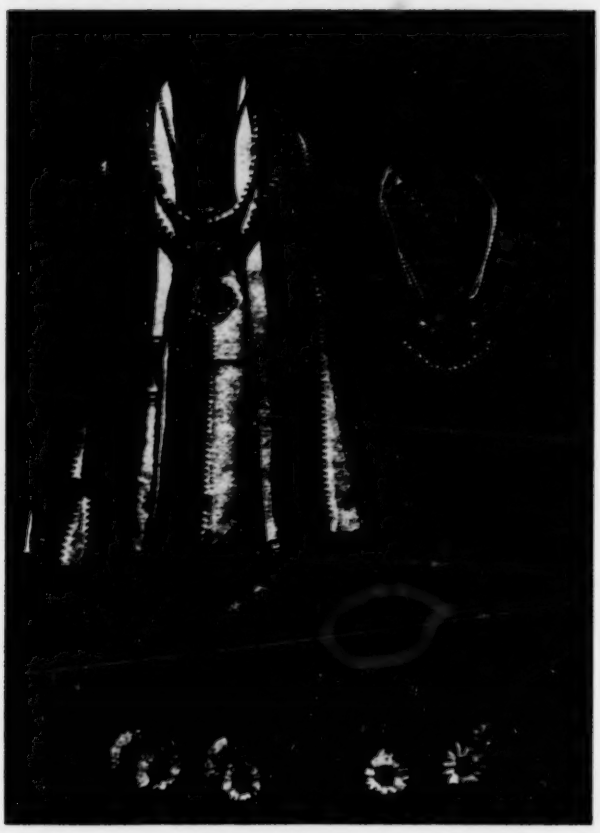
Hinduism could be called a religion of opposites. Western religions tend to draw clear distinctions between good and evil: good is of God while evil is of the Devil. Many Hindu deities, however, embrace the light and the dark. They are the sum of all of existence: right and wrong, masculine and feminine, sadness and happiness, creation and destruction, disease and health. Each deity may have several manifestations, each one representing a different side of the deity's personality. In addition, Hindus believe in reincarnation, and some of the deities themselves have many incarnations. The god Vishnu, for example, is said to have had ten incarnations.

Most images in Hindu temples and shrines are permanent and impermeable. Carved of stone, cast in metal, or painted on cloth, they may remain in one spot for centuries or even thousands of years. In some shrines, however, the icon of the principal deity is sculpted of an impermanent material and may be destroyed or left to disintegrate after the puja. Shrines themselves may also be transitory. Some rituals are enacted only once a year in conjunction with a seasonal change, while others respond to a specific need, such as relief from drought or protection from epidemic. For any of these irregular events, a temporary shrine may be built and then dismantled after use.

Many images of deities are anthropomorphic, that is, they are painted or sculpted to represent the deity in human or superhuman form. Others are abstract or amorphous—a tree, a rock, a pot, a cone, or a stake. Any of these objects, whether anthropomorphic or abstract, can be invested with the holy and powerful spirit of the deity.

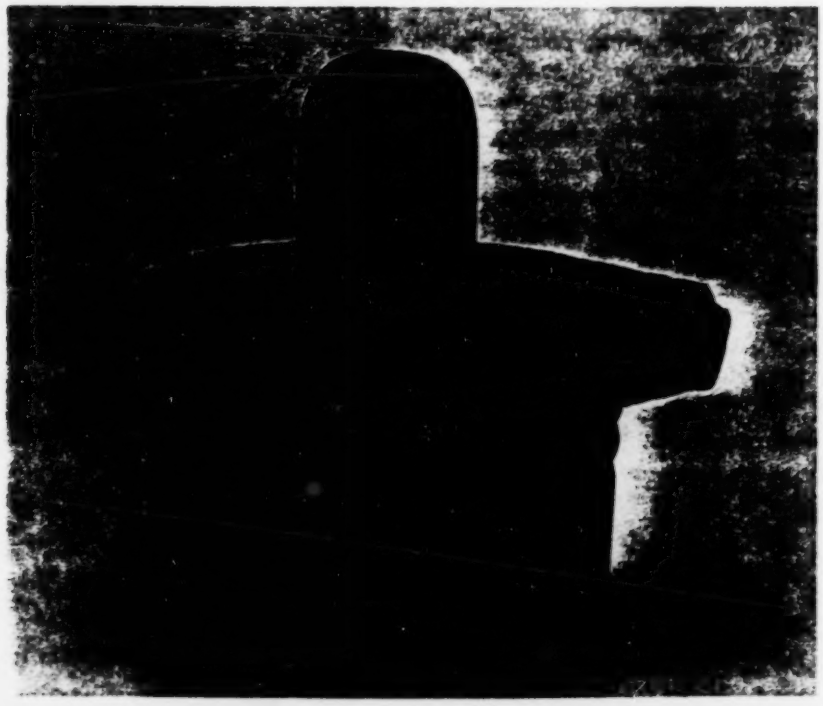
Outdoor shrine: impermanent shrine

Temple shrine: permanent shrine



Sundara and Paravai:
anthropomorphic image

Linga: abstract image
of the god Shiva



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Where do Hindus worship?

Hindus commonly conduct pujas in shrines in three different environments: in temples, in the home, and in outdoor public spaces. It is equally common for any of the deities to be worshiped in any of these three types of shrines.

Hindus believe that if proper care is not taken of a temple's images, the deity will abandon the temple. Hence priests reside at the temple and take care of the gods' needs. Priests perform puja at sunrise, noon, sunset, and midnight. For a layperson, however, visiting a temple every day or even regularly is not mandatory, and many devout Hindus worship at home. The essential aspect of puja is not congregational worship but an individual's offering to a deity. Worship in the home usually takes place daily.

Worship in Hindu temples

A Hindu temple is believed to be the earthly seat of a deity and the place where the deity waits for its devotees. As such, temple structures are sacred spaces where gods partake of human offerings and in which the people can be with the gods. Many temples resemble palace architecture; this is not surprising, as deities are often considered kings.

Temples are normally dedicated to one primary god. Often they are elaborately decorated on the outside with stone or plaster carvings depicting religious stories, and their decoration is specific to the deity being worshiped. Mythological scenes are juxtaposed with scenes of everyday life and important political events, such as royal coronations, conquests, and celebrations, or with portraits of royal and secular patrons. These divine images and mythological scenes on the outer walls of the temple help worshipers recall the sacred stories they have heard or read.

One should remove one's shoes before entering a Hindu temple in order to pay appropriate respect to the deity within the temple.

The innermost sanctuary of the temple contains the principal image of the deity. The character of each shrine is determined by the deity being worshiped.

Case Study: A Temple Dedicated to Shiva

In a temple dedicated to the god Shiva, the sacred, inner sanctum is always simple. It holds the most precious image of Shiva: a linga. The linga is a symbolic image of the god. Some people believe it derives its shape from sexual symbolism, but most Hindus view this imagery as simply a representation of the god's potency in every area of existence.

Often an image of Nandi, the sacred bull on which Shiva rides, faces the linga. Nandi signifies single-minded devotion and the peaceful strength of faith. Sets of bronze bells may hang at the front of the shrine. At the beginning of puja and during prayers, they are rung by worshipers to request the god's attention. Above the linga may be a vessel filled with holy water that is allowed to drip onto the top of the linga during puja, symbolically anointing it in order to honor the deity. At the front of the shrine there are usually oil lamps that are lit during worship. Other objects that may be used during puja are a small pot to hold holy water; a spoon for ladling the water onto the linga; an incense burner; and a handbell that is rung by the priest during the puja.

In all Hindu shrines one moves clockwise around the central image before approaching the god.

Priest dressing a linga

Worship in homes

■ Household worship is the focus of the second section of the video.

The heart of every Hindu home is its shrine: the sacred space set apart for honoring and worshiping the gods. While a particularly devout Hindu may visit a temple every day, others go there only to request a favor of the deity, to fulfill specific vows, or on festival days. The pujas that take place in the household shrine are the foundation of all family actions and decisions. Temple worship requires the intervention of a priest, but in the home the contact between devotee and deity is direct.

The size and decoration of a household shrine do not matter. The shrine may be large and impressive, an entire room or a beautifully designed edifice, or it may be simply a tiny niche, or even just a row of religious prints pasted on a wall.

Hinduism does not proselytize. Although children grow up following family beliefs, they are encouraged as young adults to make their own choices of which gods or goddesses they find personally inspiring. Consequently, household shrines contain images of deities that pertain to the belief systems of all a home's inhabitants, and it is not uncommon to find several small individual shrines in one household.

Puja is usually performed by at least one member of the household every day. Puja is a means of honoring the gods or goddesses, whose presence in the home is believed to protect the family and to engender good fortune. The paraphernalia used include an incense burner and a tray with flowers, fruits, and food.

Uma Nagarajan at her household shrine in Bethesda, Maryland

Case Study: Worship at a Household Shrine

The shrine in the photograph above is typical of one that might be found in a middle-class Hindu home. Members of the family choose objects specific to their devotion to place in the shrine. Many objects are handed down through generations, while others may be purchased during a pilgrimage or commissioned from a craftsperson in response to a special need.

As a part of daily puja, the deities' presence is honored by washing each sculpture with water and other sacred substances, dressing it, and adorning it with flowers and powdered vermilion, a red dye. During worship, each devotee gives to the gods offerings of more flowers and fruit.

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Kali-Ma shrine in eastern Uttar Pradesh

Worship at outdoor shrines

■ Worship at a tree shrine to the Goddess is the focus of the third section of the video.

Many shrines in India are outside, with either no external structure or only a small niche or edifice to designate their presence. Often deities are worshiped through natural landmarks, such as mountains, rivers, large rocks, or trees. The streets of most communities are punctuated with many such shrines: a sacred stone grappled by the roots of a banyan tree, a tiny niche tucked into the side of a building, an ancient carving resting on a cement platform at a crossroads. Frequently the deity honored is a goddess who is viewed as the mother of the community and all its affairs. The shrine may not have a full-time priest or caretaker. Instead, members of the community will take turns cleaning and caring for the image, replacing flowers and offerings as part of vows to the goddess in return for her beneficence.

Case Study: Kali-Ma Shrine

Kali-Ma, one of many forms of the Goddess, is viewed in north central India as the Mother Goddess and is petitioned for aid when any kind of problem strikes a family. Many believe her to be both the cause and the cure of smallpox, cholera, and measles. When stricken with one of these diseases, a person is said to be inhabited by Kali-Ma. Part of the cure is to honor the goddess within. Often the worshiper will promise to give the goddess terra-cotta elephants if she answers his or her prayers. These elephants are believed to become real animals in the spirit world the instant they are placed in the shrine, and many believe that Kali-Ma rides them in her nightly battles against evil. Once the elephants have been given, they are transformed by the goddess and no longer have any value. They are left beneath the tree to crumble and disintegrate, to be replaced when another devotee's prayers are answered.

In these photographs of a shrine to the goddess Kali-Ma, the presence of the goddess is announced by three symbols: first, the sacred tree that throughout India indicates a divine presence; second, the small cone *(pinda)* of sculpted clay representing the goddess Kali-Ma, which is unique to her worship in eastern Uttar Pradesh; and third, the iron trident *(trishula)* that is the weapon she uses to kill her evil foes. Surrounding these three symbols are terra-cotta elephants given to her during her pujas.

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When do Hindus worship?

Hindu worship may take place whenever an individual wishes. Worship is usually performed daily at each household shrine by one or more family members on behalf of the whole household. Temple worship is often associated with a particular request being made of the deity, or it may follow the granting of that wish. Festivals to each of the gods take place during the year, and a follower of a certain deity may choose to participate in the ceremonies associated with that deity either at home or in a temple.

How is puja performed?

Wherever puja is performed it includes three important components: the seeing of the deity; puja, or worship, which includes offering flowers, fruits, and foods; and retrieving the blessed food and consuming it. By performing these sacred acts the worshiper creates a relationship with the divine through his or her emotions and senses.

During a household puja, the head of the household chants prayers to the god or goddess. The worshipers offer the deity a seat, wash its feet, and give it water. An image may be symbolically bathed, clothed in new garments, and embellished with ornaments. Perfumes and ointments may be applied, and flowers and garlands may be placed before it. Incense is burned, and a lighted lamp is waved in front of the deity. Foods such as cooked rice, fruit, butter, and sugar are offered. Family members bow before the image, sip the water they have given the god, and receive a portion of cooked food. The food and water are now considered to have been blessed by the deity for the devotees.

At the temple, where the gods are believed to dwell as royalty, puja is usually performed at sunrise, noon, sunset, and midnight. Worshipers may also arrange for a puja to be done by a priest to mark a special event such as a birth or death or to ask for a particular favor.

Puja is a multisensory experience. One observes the offering of the lighted lamps, touches the ritual objects and feet of the deity (where possible), hears the ringing of the bells and the sacred chants being recited, smells the incense, and tastes the blessed food offered at the end of the ritual.

How are sculptures of deities used in Hindu worship?

Hindu sacred sculptures are used to help devotees understand the incomprehensible divinity. These images may be anthropomorphic—that is, having a human likeness—or they may be abstract. Whether made of clay or of gold, all these sculptures are considered equally sacred. Hindu images serve as visual metaphors to express the invisible divine reality.

Although many images of Hindu gods, goddesses, and saints are believed to be always filled with the spirit of the deity they represent, others are bathed and dressed to invite the deity or saint to enter the image temporarily. The bronze sculpture below depicts the saint Sundara and his wife, Paravai, followers of the god Shiva. On the right it is shown dressed as it would be when carried through the streets of a southern Indian city during a religious festival. For most of the year, an image such as this is kept in its own shrine in a large temple. Once a year during an elaborate puja, it is washed with sacred water, then with milk, yogurt, honey, sandalwood paste, and ashes before being dressed in ceremonial robes. It is lavishly adorned with garlands of flowers and may also be decorated with jewelry.

Priests then invoke the spirit of the deity or saint depicted to enter the bronze. For the duration of the ceremony the image is thought to contain the divine being's presence. In an elaborate procession many sacred images are paraded through the streets accompanied by thousands of devotees. Hindus believe that even a glimpse of an image filled with the spirit of the god or saint facilitates a direct visual communication (darshan) with the deity, which will bring blessings to the worshiper. Darshan is a reciprocal act between the worshiper and the deity. Not only does the devotee "see" the deity, but the deity is understood to "see" the worshiper. For this reason, Hindu images often have strikingly large eyes to facilitate this exchange of glances between devotee and deity.

Sundara was an eighth-century follower of the god Shiva whose focused devotion and performance of countless miracles with Shiva's aid were greatly responsible for the spread of the worship of Shiva in southern India. His wife, Paravai, is honored for her steadfast loyalty to both her god and her husband.

Figures of Sundara and Paravai before and after being dressed for worship. Tamil Nadu, 16th century. Bronze, 57.2 x 37.1 x 19 cm. Gift of Arthur M. Sackler. S1987.902

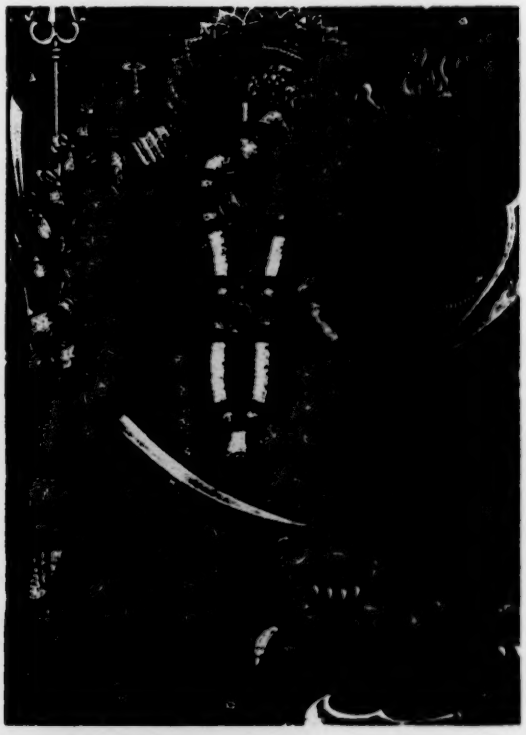
Why are offerings given to images of the deities?

Offerings are an essential part of worship. During puja a devotee presents gifts that, according to tradition, the particular god or goddess likes: often flowers, special foods, grains, coconuts, or oils. If the offering is made in a temple, a portion of it is kept for use by the temple, and the rest is returned, now blessed by the deity. Offerings made in the household shrine are later divided among family members. Reciprocity, the process of giving and receiving, is an essential aspect of Hinduism. Hindus are taught that by giving, they receive, and that when they receive, they should respond with gifts. When a Hindu prays for a specific favor from a deity, he or she may vow to present a special gift to the god or goddess or to perform an arduous duty if the wish is granted. Much of the apparent wealth of a temple and many of the good deeds carried out in a community are the direct results of honoring those religious commitments.

Why do the deities have multiple arms and heads?

Deities are often portrayed with multiple arms, especially when they are battling cosmic forces. The multiplicity of arms emphasizes the deity's immense power and ability to perform several acts at the same time. The portrayal of a deity in human form but with multiple arms is the artist's attempt to express the deity's superhuman power. Demons are frequently depicted with multiple heads to convey their superhuman power as well.

Occasionally a deity is shown with more than one head in an attempt to describe various aspects of the character of that deity. For example, when the god Shiva is portrayed with a triple head, the central face indicates his essential character and the flanking faces depict his fierce and blissful natures.



Contemporary Indian poster of the goddess Durga

How do I identify the different deities?

How do I identify images of the god Shiva and his family?

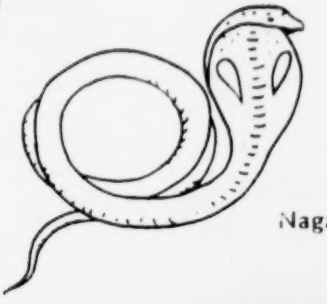
Shiva

The god Shiva, the Creator and Destroyer, is often shown with a cobra, the Naga, symbol of fertility and strength, wrapped around his neck. The god usually has four arms, signifying his superhuman power, each with a hand holding one of his attributes. He uses the *trishula*, or trident, like a spear to destroy his demon foes. Frequently he holds a drum rattle whose sound creates life as it reverberates through the cosmos. The beads of his rosary symbolize all time (past, present, and future) and its transcendence. The three horizontal lines often seen on Shiva's forehead represent three aspects of the divine: the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer. During puja, many devotees of Shiva mark their own foreheads with these three lines in sacred ash or sandalwood paste.

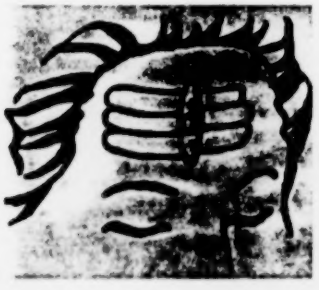
trishula

Contemporary poster of the god Shiva and his family

drum rattle



Naga



three horizontal lines

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Parvati

The god Shiva is frequently depicted in a powerful masculine form accompanied by Parvati, his wife. Parvati, the Mother of All Creation, is usually portrayed as sublimely feminine, her gaze fixed upon Shiva, suggesting the union of male and female so integral to worship of this deity. Like all the other deities, Parvati may be worshiped on her own. In conjunction with Shiva, she is the feminine complement to his masculine divinity, completing the essential balance of opposites.

Ganesha

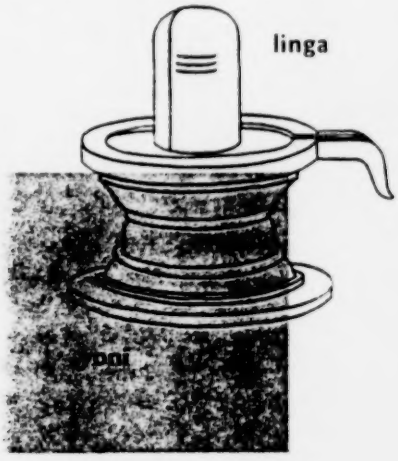
Ganesha, son of Shiva and Parvati, is one of the most popular gods in India. It is said that no home of followers of Shiva is complete without an image of Ganesha to protect its activities. Worshipers pray to the elephant-headed god to ensure success before beginning any new endeavor. He is usually portrayed with a round belly and a happy expression. According to one legend, Parvati posted her son Ganesha as guardian of her bath and insisted that he let no one enter. Shiva had been away for a long time, so when he returned, Ganesha did not recognize his father. Shiva demanded to see his wife, but the faithful boy refused and was beheaded. Parvati, distraught, declared that she would have no relations with her husband until her son was returned to life. Shiva therefore decreed that Ganesha would be given the head of the next being that appeared. When an elephant came along, Ganesha received that animal's head and was brought back to life in the form now beloved by millions of devotees.

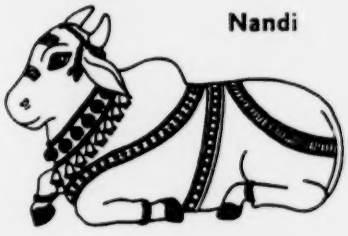
Common Symbols of Shiva

The most common symbol of the god Shiva is the linga. A linga, often seen resting in a yoni, is a symbolic image of the god that signifies the union of opposites (male and female, good and evil, light and dark). Some people believe it derives its shape from sexual symbolism, but most Hindus view it as simply a representation of the god's potency in every area of existence.

Nandi

Nandi, the sacred bull that Shiva rides, is another commonly recognizable symbol of Shiva worship. Nandi represents strength, faith, and constancy in belief. Images of Nandi often sit directly outside a shrine to Shiva, facing the deity.





Bronze sculpture of the elephant-headed Ganesha, one of the most popular gods in India. West Bengal or Bangladesh, late 11th century. 4.5 x 3.5 x 2.4 cm. Gift of Dr. David R. Nalin. S1992.47

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20

How do I identify images of the god Vishnu, his wife, Lakshmi, and their incarnations?

Vishnu

Vishnu, the god of home and family values, represents stability and order. Vishnu is recognizable by the four symbols he often carries: the discus, conch, club, and lotus. The discus and club are both weapons, signifying his absolute might in destroying evil. The lotus represents fertility and regeneration, the nourishment of the soul that occurs through devotion to this deity. The conch shell is blown in India like a trumpet during many sacred rituals. It is considered to make the purest sound, from which creation springs. In Vishnu's hand the conch symbolizes purity and auspiciousness. In paintings and prints, Vishnu is often shown with blue skin to accentuate his otherworldliness. A stylized representation of his footprints appears on his forehead. This V-shaped symbol of the god is also applied in sandalwood paste to the foreheads of worshipers of Vishnu during puja.

Lakshmi

Vishnu's wife, Lakshmi, is the Goddess of Abundance and Prosperity. She is frequently depicted standing on a lotus throne and holding lotuses in her hands. As the goddess of prosperity, she is often shown with gold coins spilling from her hands. Lakshmi is associated with light and is honored with lighted lamps and fireworks in every household on Divali (or Deepavali), the Hindu New Year, one of India's most popular festivals. Lamps depicting Lakshmi, sometimes riding an elephant, are filled with clarified butter and lighted as a part of puja to Vishnu or his incarnations.

Vishnu's footprints

Incarnations of Vishnu

The god Vishnu is viewed as a savior who has been reborn on earth many times to conquer and balance evil. In each reincarnation, Vishnu is accompanied by an incarnation of Lakshmi—proving the everlasting power of marital love. The two most popular forms in which Vishnu has been reincarnated are Rama and Krishna.

Contemporary poster of the god Vishnu and his wife, Lakshmi

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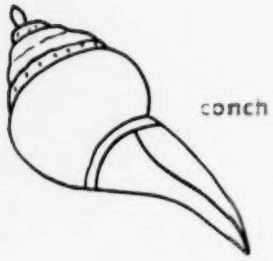
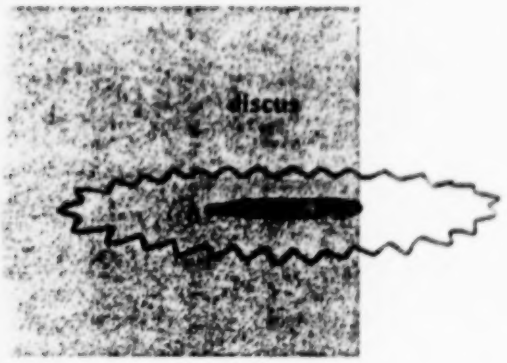
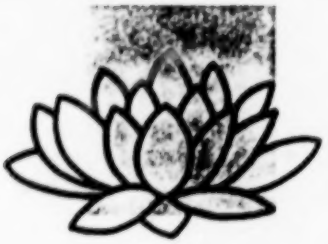


conch





lotus

Rama and Sita

Vishnu's incarnation as the princely hero Rama epitomizes loyalty, bravery, strength, and responsibility. Rama's beloved Sita, one of Lakshmi's many forms, is the traditional ideal Hindu woman: feminine, faithful, resilient, and pure. They are often accompanied by the monkey god Hanuman. Hanuman, the gods' messenger, symbolizes the power to achieve the impossible and embodies a conscientious sense of duty, absolute trustworthiness, and selfless service to the gods.

Krishna and Radha

Krishna, shown below with his beloved Radha, is an incarnation of the god Vishnu. He is worshiped by more Hindus than any other of Vishnu's many forms. Krishna was born human, and the stories of his childhood and adolescence exemplify his mischievous character. One story often illustrated by artists describes how, as an infant, he crawled away from his mother to steal butter. Other images depict Krishna dancing on the snake Kaliya. This refers to a famous legend in which the hero-god conquered a demon serpent. Images of the youthful Krishna playing his flute are also popular. Later, as the wise hero of the ancient epic the *Mahabharata*, he established the fundamental principles of practical Hinduism.

Rama (center), Sita (right), and a kneeling Hanuman, in a modern poster from India

A contemporary Indian poster of Krishna and Radha

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Right: Figures of Parvati and Shiva. West Bengal or Bangladesh. 11th century. Bronze. 22.7 x 12.7 x 10.4 cm. Gift of Dr. David R. Nalin and Dr. Richard J. Nalin. S1992.62 a-b

Far right: Bronze sculpture of Durga as Mahisha Mardini. West Bengal or Bangladesh. 12th century. 15.7 x 10.1 x 8.2 cm. Gift of Dr. David R. Nalin. S1992.46

Devi: The Hindu Goddess

Today hundreds of millions of Hindu men and women conduct regular pujas to the deity known as Devi, or sometimes simply the Goddess. For some she is their primary deity, while for others she is part of a greater pantheon. Embodying the feminine principle, she has innumerable aspects and manifestations. All Hindu goddesses, in fact, can be seen as different forms of Devi. In some she is benign and gentle, while in others she is dynamic and ferocious, but in all forms she is helpful to her devotees. Primarily she is the Mother Goddess, from whom all creation is born. For many Hindus, however, the most important aspect of the Goddess is Durga, the warrior deity who fights adversity. The Goddess may also appear as the consort or feminine complement of a major male deity.

Goddess worship was widespread in early prehistoric India. Later, invading populations brought with them new ideas and elevated the popularity of male gods. Although the primary deity worshiped in most major Hindu temples today is masculine, worship of the Goddess coexists in shrines and temples throughout India.

Forms of the Goddess

The Goddess has innumerable forms and manifestations. Nearly every Hindu community in India has its own specific deity that governs its existence, and usually that deity is considered a goddess.

Parvati

Parvati is the wife of Shiva, the feminine complement to his masculine energy. In the sculpture shown above, she is seated on her husband's lap, their arms around one another and their heads tilted so that they can gaze into each other's eyes. From their union the universe was created; through their union it is sustained.

Durga

Durga, the great Warrior Goddess, is one of many manifestations of Parvati. She represents the lethal energy of divine anger when turned against evil. Legend states that the world was once under attack by the worst of all demons, Mahisha. The male gods, fearing total annihilation, endowed Durga with all their powers, symbolized by her multiple arms, each of which carries a different god's weapon. Riding a lion into battle, she fought Mahisha, who took many different forms, including that of a buffalo. Durga slew the buffalo by cutting off its head and then destroyed the spirit of the demon as he emerged from the beast's neck. The goddess's face portrays her calm serenity even while confronting such adversity.

Lakshmi

Householders worship Lakshmi for the health and welfare of their families; business men and women offer her prayers to ensure the success of their

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Figure of the Goddess (Mata). Bastar District, Madhya Pradesh. 19th–20th century. Bronze. 45.6 x 12.1 x 9.9 cm. Lent by Paul F. Walter. LTS1992.10.102 a–b

endeavors. A goddess in her own right, Lakshmi is also Vishnu's wife, reincarnated alongside the god in each new age to be his equal partner and his wellspring of strength. Lakshmi is frequently shown standing in her lotus throne and holding lotus buds, symbols of beauty and fertility. Cascades of gold coins flow from her hands, suggesting that those who worship her will gain wealth.

Contemporary poster of Lakshmi, the Goddess of Abundance and Prosperity

Mata

The people of the Gond tribe in Bastar District in central India often worship the Mother Goddess, generically known as Mata. Descended from the subcontinent's earliest inhabitants, the Gonds have been influenced by Hindus who have settled in the region. Over time they have synthesized their ancestral worship with Hindu rituals. Although they worship male gods as well, most often their focus of devotion is the Mother Goddess. Frequently the deity herself is represented only by a wooden post or log, although her image may also be carved in stone or cast in bronze.

Bronze images of Mata in her many forms are given to the goddess by her devotees in gratitude for answered prayers. They become a link between the devotee and the deity that will be reaffirmed at each subsequent puja. These small bronzes are not normally on view. They are stored in a basket or box and placed in the shrine only for special occasions. At that time they are washed with holy water and mustard oil and adorned with leaves, rice, and flowers. A shaman then invites Mata's spirit into his body. In a trance he speaks with the voice of the goddess, accepting the new bronze image and acknowledging its donor.

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Below is the transcript of a discussion among five young American Hindus who live in the Washington, D.C., area. It focuses on aspects of puja and Hindu life for young Americans. The participants were all born in the United States, except for Sanjay, who was born in England. Their parents had left India to further their own education. They each travel to India every two or three years to see their grandparents and other relatives. They are very proud to be Hindus and wish that Hinduism were better understood by Americans.

Sanjay Hinduism emphasizes duty and honor. If you do the basic things, like if you look after your family, your friends, and those around you, that's the best way of worshiping God. You can sit and worship an idol or you can pray every day, but if you [aren't dutiful and honorable], it doesn't mean anything.

People think of Indians as having many gods. But Hinduism is not polytheistic, it's monotheistic. It's just that God can be viewed in different ways. A Christian may go to church and pray to God, "Please, God, help me with my exam," whereas a Hindu could pray to Saraswati, the Goddess of Knowledge. When you pray to Saraswati, you are just focusing on one particular aspect of God. Since God has no form, you can view God in many different ways.

Anura You don't need idols [to worship], but they are very helpful for visual learning. If I have a picture of the god in my head, it helps me concentrate on the idea better.

Nithya Each of the images tells a story and each story has a lesson that is trying to be portrayed through the image.

Sanjay People ask, "Why do gods have multiple arms?" Well, have you ever said, "I wish I had more arms—I can't do everything"? If you had eight pairs of arms you could do a lot more.

People ask, "Why does the god Ganesha have an elephant's head?" Well, the elephant is considered one of the wisest animals, and Ganesha is a very wise god. His big ears mean he listens a lot. His mouth is generally covered, which means he doesn't speak too much. He is very wise because he doesn't talk too much and he listens. So the elephant head is a simple way of reminding us of this.

Each idol provides a focus so that you can concentrate on that one aspect of religion. You aren't praying to the idol, it is just a path to God. Some people need something to focus on, others don't. It's there if you need it.

Anura I love going to the temple because of the mood and setting, and seeing all of the images of the gods together. You know that the gods are there all around you. We are taught that God is *always* all around you, but when you go to the temple and see all of the images of the gods, you can really visualize it. It paints a picture.

Nithya You don't have to go to temple to worship—which is good because up to ten years ago there was no temple in this area. Our parents kept the religion alive at home with the religious holidays. You learn about Hinduism from your parents.

Shruti My parents made it fun for me. My mother told me stories about the gods, about celebrating festivals in India, and now we celebrate them here.

Arathi You start reading comic books [based on the Hindu epics the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*] at a young age. I remember my parents and grandparents reading them to me.

Anura When gods interact with one another in a story, it's to teach a lesson. A lot of these things are symbolic. The stories help you understand a particular idea. A story is the best way to explain the idea.

Sanjay The comic books get your interest. For the guys they have the war; for the girls they have the love stuff. But later on you start to understand the message.

A DISCUSSION WITH YOUNG AMERICAN HINDUS

Shruti There is lots of symbolism in the stories. I know many of the stories. I began learning them when I was two. You can't quickly explain all of these stories.

Anura In each story there is a moral that you can use in daily life. I love learning new stories. Half of the religion I know has been taught to me through Indian dance. I've been taking lessons since I was six or seven. The dances are all about the gods: what they act like, what they look like. They each tell a story. The stories are passed down through the dances. They tell so much about the culture.

Nithya Every time you go to an Indian concert to hear music or see dance, you hear the stories. If you listen to the words in the songs, you are listening to Hindu religion.

Arathi If you had to sum up Hinduism you would say it's about duty, honor and family.

Sanjay There is one story that sums it up: Shiva and Parvati are sitting with their sons, Ganesha and Karttikeya. They have one mango between them and Ganesha and Karttikeya are fighting over the mango. Shiva says, "OK, I will give the mango to whichever of you goes around the universe and comes back first." So Karttikeya speeds off and goes around the universe and comes back. But when he gets back Ganesha has finished the mango. Karttikeya asks, "Father, how can this be? Ganesha didn't pass me. I was always in the lead. How could he have come back before me?" And Shiva says, "He walked around his parents. That should be the universe to every child."

Arathi Duty and honor are the basis of the religion. I think all of the gods are only stories to portray those ideas. They are meant to teach us how we should live. How to be righteous and peaceful. That's the reason why we pray to God. We have the gods to show us what we are trying to be. For the main concepts of Hinduism you don't need all of the gods and all of the stories. To be called a Hindu you just need to be good.

Left to right: Nithya Nagarajan, 26 years old, works for the United States Trade Administration. Sanjay Subramanian, 22 years old, is studying for his B.A. in finance and economics and wants to be a mutual fund manager. Anuradha (Anura) Subramanian, 16 years old, wants to be a doctor like her mother. Her sister Arathi Subramanian, 13 years old, wants to go into business like her father. Anura and Arathi are both cousins of Sanjay. Shruti Murti, 13 years old, wants to be a lawyer.

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This section includes activities for your students and suggests ways of incorporating the *Discussion with Young American Hindus*, the video, the posters, and the exhibition. The activities for students are divided into those to use

- before you visit the museum or to begin your unit of study
- during your visit to the museum or as a research project
- after your visit to the museum or after completing the unit

These activities provide a model for you to modify and adapt to your own curriculum and classroom.

Before you visit the museum or to begin your unit of study

Discussion with students

The *Discussion with Young American Hindus* may be photocopied and distributed to students to be read and discussed in small groups or as a class. This activity may be used before a visit to the museum to introduce students to some of the ways in which objects are used as a focus during worship or after a visit to enhance student understanding of the role of objects in worship. The discussion among young Americans who are Hindus highlights students' understanding of Hindu gods and the use of images of the gods and other art forms for teaching worshipers about Hinduism.

Objectives

At the end of discussing the reading, students will be able to

- recognize that there are practicing Hindus in the United States
- explain how different art forms are used as methods for teaching about Hinduism
- discuss the use of visual images and metaphors to help explain abstract ideas

Activity

- Discuss with students the basic beliefs of Hinduism that the young Hindus emphasized in their discussion (duty, honor, family). Explore the different methods for teaching about Hinduism that the young people highlighted in their discussion (family, stories, comic books, images, dance, music). In addition to this reading, you may want to bring into the classroom Indian music, a video of Indian dance, or comic book stories from the *Mahabharata* or the *Ramayana* (for sources of materials see *Resources for Teaching about India and Hinduism*, pages 39–40). Read a comic book version of a Hindu epic as a class and analyze the moral of the story.
- Have students create lists of familiar visual images and metaphors that are used to help explain abstract ideas. Discuss the worldwide use of metaphors to help explain unknowns (creation myths, scientific models, etc.).
- Ask students to debate the statement "Hindus use objects as a focus *for* worship rather than a focus *of* worship."
- Compare the central beliefs of Hinduism with other religions and philosophies.

ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

The god Shiva, his wife, Parvati, and their son Ganesha

The god Vishnu and his wife, Lakshmi

The goddess Durga

Posters

The posters that accompany this packet may be put on bulletin boards in the classroom in order for students to familiarize themselves with the some of the Hindu deities. Identifying the differences between the various deities requires careful looking, so you may want to ask the students to try one of the following activities to practice their looking skills.

1 Distance, Description, and Drawing

Objectives

At the end of this exercise students will

- recognize the importance of symbols to identify different gods
- recognize the need for careful looking
- understand the need for detailed description in order to identify different gods

Activity

- Before showing the posters to the students, divide the class into pairs. Give one person from each of the pairs a photocopy of one of the posters and the other person a blank sheet of paper. Tell the students that they must imagine that they are in separate buildings and are talking to one another over the phone (one person might be in India and the other one in the United States). In other words, no peeking. Ask each student with a poster to describe it clearly so that his or her partner can draw the image. When the pairs have finished describing and drawing, have the students compare their drawings with the poster images. Mix up all of the drawings and put them with the posters on one wall. Working with the whole class, without the originators of the drawings revealing their sources, have the group try to decide which of the gods is represented in each drawing. As a class, discuss which drawings look most like the posters. You may want to use the worksheet *Symbols of the Gods* on pages 29–30 to help identify different symbols associated with each deity. Notice that as long as the drawings include certain key elements they can be associated with a particular poster and a particular god or goddess.

2 Compare, Contrast, Research

Objectives

At the end of this exercise students will

- recognize the importance of symbols to identify different gods
- recognize the need for careful looking
- understand the need for detailed description in order to identify different gods

Activity

- Have students compare the different posters. Ask students to describe the demeanor of each of the deities, list the symbols that the gods hold, and, using their imagination, describe the personality and character of each of them.

- Have the students work in groups to research each of the deities and the symbolism of the objects associated with the deities. Ask the groups to report their findings to the class and to compare their impressions of the deities before and after researching the characteristics of the gods. Have students read a story associated with their deity to the class or turn the story into a skit and perform it for the class.

Video

The video may be viewed before or after a visit to the museum, or at the beginning of a unit of study. It may be used to introduce students to puja as it is conducted in three different settings—the temple, the home, and outdoors—and to explain that Hinduism is practiced around the world today, including in the United States.

Objectives

After viewing the video students will be able to

- explain some of the basic concepts of Hinduism
- define puja
- explain some of the steps involved in puja
- identify Hinduism as a religion that is actively practiced around the world today

Activity

- View the first section of the video, which provides a brief overview of the practice of puja, with students. Then, using the information provided in this packet entitled *Background Information for Teachers* on pages 8–23, review the basic concepts of Hinduism, define puja, and list some of the steps involved in puja.
- With students, view the second section of the video, which shows household worship, and the third section, which shows worship of the Goddess in the form of a tree at a rural, outdoor shrine.
- Discuss the differences between worship in the three locations: the temple, the home, and outdoors (see pages 12–14).
- Discuss the worldwide spread of Hinduism and explore the practice of Hinduism in the United States.

During your visit to the museum or as a research project

Symbols of the gods

In order to allow worshipers to identify the deity depicted in a sculpture or painting, artists developed conventions for portraying each deity. These conventions usually relate to the symbols the deity holds or the standard ways gods are depicted in favorite stories. One deity may have several symbols and tales associated with it, but few images include all of these symbols and references in one piece. Usually a deity can be identified if two or more of its associated symbols are present. Remember that one symbol may represent more than one deity. It is the combination of symbols that identifies specific deities.

The following page is an activity sheet for you to photocopy for use during your visit to the museum or as a research project in the classroom. It requires students to identify some of the symbols associated with particular Hindu gods.

Objective

At the end of this activity students will be able to

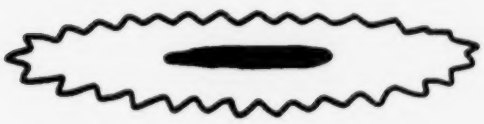
- identify and explain the meaning of symbols associated with some Hindu deities

Activity

- In the gallery, have students explore the exhibition looking for representations of the deities and their symbols. Have students read the labels to find out what the symbols signify and to identify the god portrayed. In the classroom, have students research different Hindu deities and identify the symbols associated with them.

SYMBOLS OF THE GODS

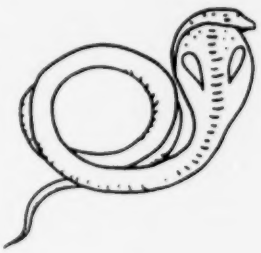
Shown below are a number of symbols associated with various Hindu gods. Identify each symbol and explain its meaning. List the deity or deities it is associated with.



1 Name of symbol _____

This represents _____

Associated with the deity _____



2 Name of symbol _____

This represents _____

Associated with the deity _____

3 Name of symbol _____

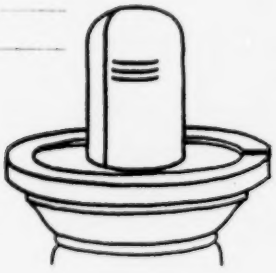
This represents _____

Associated with the deity _____

4 Name of symbol _____

This represents _____

Associated with the deity _____



5 Name of symbol _____

This represents _____

Associated with the deity _____

6 Name of symbol _____

This represents _____

Associated with the deity _____

7 Name of symbol _____

This represents _____

Associated with the deity _____

3 Name of symbol _____

This represents _____

Associated with the deity _____

9 Name of symbol _____

This represents _____

Associated with the deity _____

10 Name of symbol _____

This represents _____

Associated with the deity _____

11 Name of symbol _____

This represents _____

Associated with the deity _____

12 Name of symbol _____

This represents _____

Associated with the deity _____

13 Name of symbol _____

This represents _____

Associated with the deity _____

14 Name of symbol _____

This represents _____

Associated with the deity _____

Answers

1 Naga
The Naga, or cobra, is a symbol of fertility and strength. The god Shiva is often depicted with a Naga draped around his neck.
Shiva

2 Discus
The discus is a symbolic weapon. In Vishnu's hands it signifies his absolute might in destroying evil.
Vishnu

3 Club
The club is a divine weapon. When held by Vishnu the club signifies his absolute might in destroying evil.
Vishnu

4 Linga
A linga is a symbolic image of the god Shiva. It signifies the union of opposites (male and female, good and evil, light and dark). Some people believe it derives its shape from sexual symbolism, but most Hindus view the linga as a representation of the god's potency in every area of existence.
Shiva

5 Lion
Durga, the great Warrior Goddess, is often shown riding a lion into battle. She is one of many manifestations of Parvati and represents the lethal energy of divine anger when turned against evil.
Durga

6 Hanuman
Hanuman, the messenger of the gods, is most commonly associated with Vishnu's incarnation as Rama. He is also worshiped independently in shrines throughout India. Hanuman symbolizes the power to achieve the impossible and embodies a conscientious sense of duty and selfless service to the gods.
Rama and Vishnu

7 Vishnu's footprints
A V-shaped symbol is often shown on Vishnu's forehead, a stylized representation of his footprints. This same mark is applied in sandalwood paste to the foreheads of worshipers of Vishnu during puja.
Vishnu

8 Nandi
Nandi, the sacred bull, is the mount of the god Shiva. Nandi represents strength, faith, and constancy in belief. Images of Nandi often sit directly outside a shrine to Shiva, facing the deity.
Shiva

9 Ganesha
Ganesha, the elephant-headed son of Shiva and Parvati, is one of the most popular gods in India. Worshipers pray to Ganesha to ensure success before beginning any new endeavor. He is usually portrayed with a round belly and a happy expression.
Shiva

10 Youth Playing the Flute
Krishna is the most popular of the god Vishnu's incarnations, and images of the youthful Krishna playing the flute are particularly well-loved. Krishna was born human, and the stories of his childhood and adolescence exemplify his mischievous character.
Krishna and Vishnu

11 Conch Shell
The conch shell is blown in India like a trumpet during many sacred rituals. It is considered to make the purest sound, from which creation springs. In Vishnu's hands the conch symbolizes purity and auspiciousness.
Vishnu

12 Three Horizontal Lines
The three horizontal lines often seen on Shiva's forehead represent three aspects of the divine: the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer. During puja, many devotees of Shiva mark their own foreheads with these three lines in sacred ash or sandalwood paste.
Shiva

13 Crawling Baby
Krishna, an incarnation of the god Vishnu, is worshiped by more Hindus than any other of Vishnu's many forms. Krishna was born human, and popular stories describe his childhood and his exploits. A common image portrays how, as an infant, he crawled away from his mother to steal butter.
Krishna and Vishnu

14 *Trishula*, or Trident
A symbolic weapon used by deities to destroy demon foes, the *trishula* is an important symbol of Shiva and of the goddess Kali-Ma.
Shiva or Kali-Ma

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After your visit to the museum or after completing a classroom unit

1 Analogies, Metaphors, and Personification

Hindu images may be seen as an attempt to describe powers greater than humankind. Knowable forces such as the forces of nature serve as metaphors to help us understand the power of the divine. The god Shiva is seen as both the Preserver and the Destroyer. The divine power of Shiva can be understood by using an analogy from the natural world such as the destructive power and the rejuvenating aspects of a hurricane. Although a hurricane with its fierce winds and heavy rains can create massive destruction, the result is often a sudden burst of new plant growth.

Objective
At the end of this activity students will be able to

- discuss the use of visual images, analogies, metaphors, and personification to help explain abstract ideas

Activity
- Define and discuss analogy, metaphor, and personification. The activity sheet on the next page may be photocopied and distributed to students working as individuals or in small teams to create a visual image, a written description, or a verbal report that uses a metaphor to describe a power greater than humankind (divine power, nuclear power, nature).

2 Reuse and Recycle

Images of Hindu gods may be made of precious materials such as gold and silver or from everyday items such as wood and clay.

Objectives
At the end of this activity students will

- recognize that Hindu images may be made of different materials
- understand that the materials used do not alter the efficacy of the image as a means of communicating with the gods

Activity
- Read the description of the dressing of images in a temple (see page 16) and the use of terra-cotta images at an outdoor shrine (see page 14). Have students, working as individuals or in a group, select a Hindu god to sculpt. Before they begin, have them list characteristics of the god they would like to include in the image. Just as images of Hindu gods may be sculpted in gold and decked in jewels or fashioned from a tree or a lump of mud, have students create an image from recycled materials or "dressed" with fabric and homemade jewels.

3 Create a Shrine: Installation Art

Every Hindu devotee makes his or her own choice as to which gods and goddesses he or she will worship. The household shrine made by each devotee is dedicated to those personal deities. A sacred space is created and the objects included in the shrine are selected and arranged by each householder in the way that he or she believes best pays homage to the deities.

Objective
At the end of this activity students will be able to

- discuss the nature of shrines, the notion of sacred space, and the use of offerings

Activity
- Discuss the nature of shrines, the notion of sacred space, and the use of offerings in world religions. Have students, working as individuals or in a group, create an installation that is a shrine to a deity. Have students select a twentieth-century "deity" to "worship" (e.g., time, television, junk food). Create an appropriate "sacred space" and select and arrange objects to use within the shrine.

Other activities

Hindu Art
Include other art forms in your classroom. Hindu stories are an integral part of Hindu culture. They are shared in oral tradition and in comic books, and they form the basis of much Indian music and dance.

A Visit to a Hindu Temple
Arrange to visit a temple in your area. There are hundreds of Hindu temples across the United States, and most welcome school groups. Look in your yellow pages under "Churches" to find out if there is a temple near you.

A Visit from a Hindu Neighbor
Ask a practicing Hindu in your community to speak to your class. He or she might explain some of the beliefs and practices of Hinduism and discuss what it is like being a Hindu in the United States.

METAPHORS AND PERSONIFICATION

Create a visual image, a written description, or a verbal report that uses a metaphor to describe a power greater than humankind (divine power, nuclear power, nature). Come up with two images of the superhuman power, one that is a personification and another that is an abstract representation. Consider creating a representation of the abstract idea that would be understood by using senses other than sight: convey your idea of the superhuman power using music, food, or an environment. Could you create a musical, edible, or tactile personification of the force?

abstract
When referring to religious images, abstract means that an object is not a realistic representation of a deity, but rather a symbol such as a tree, a rock, a pot, a cone, or a stake.

anthropomorphic
In humanlike form. Sometimes gods are represented with a figure that looks like a person, although it may have additional superhuman characteristics.

Aryans
A people who spoke Indo-European languages and who occupied the Iranian plateau before they entered India between 1800 and 1200 B.C., conquering and amalgamating with earlier non-Indo-European inhabitants.

club
A divine symbol that, when held by Vishnu, signifies the god's absolute might in destroying evil.

conch shell
The conch shell is blown in India like a trumpet during many sacred rituals. It is considered to make the purest sound, from which creation springs. In Vishnu's hand the conch symbolizes purity and auspiciousness.

darshan (dar-shahn)
Hindus believe that even a glimpse of an image filled with the spirit of a god or saint facilitates a direct visual communication (darshan) with the deity, which will bring blessings to the worshiper.

Devi (Day-vee)
A widely used name for the multiple forms of the Hindu Goddess.

discus
The discus is a symbolic weapon. In Vishnu's hands it signifies his absolute might in destroying evil.

drum rattle
A symbol frequently held by Shiva. The sound of the drum rattle creates life as it reverberates through the cosmos.

Durga (DOOR-gah)
Durga, the great Warrior Goddess, is one of many manifestations of Parvati and represents the lethal energy of divine anger when turned against evil.

Ganesha (Geh-nay-sha)
Ganesha, the elephant-headed son of Shiva and Parvati, is one of the most popular gods in India. Worshipers pray to Ganesha to ensure success before beginning any new endeavor.

Lakshmi (Lahk-shmee)
Vishnu's wife, Lakshmi, is the Goddess of Abundance and Prosperity.

linga (LING-gah)
The linga is a symbolic image of the god Shiva that signifies the union of opposites (male and female, good and evil, light and dark). Some people believe it derives its shape from sexual symbolism, but most Hindus view it as simply a representation of the god's potency in every area of existence.

lotus
The lotus, frequently associated with the goddess Lakshmi, represents fertility and regeneration.

Mahabharata (Mahah-bahrahtah)
This great epic poem tells of the struggle for power between two noble and related families. It has the distinction of being the longest epic poem in the world, having grown over a period of centuries (perhaps 1000 to 500 B.C.) to a length of 100,000 couplets.

Naga (Nah-gah)
The Naga, or cobra, is a symbol of fertility and strength. The god Shiva is often depicted with a Naga draped around his neck.

Nandi (Nahn-dee)
Nandi, the sacred bull, is the mount of the god Shiva. He represents strength, faith, and constancy in belief.

pinda (pin-dah)
A small cone of sculpted clay that represents the goddess Kali-Ma in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

puja (poo-jah; first syllable rhymes with "zoo")
Puja is the act of showing reverence to a god, a spirit, or another aspect of the divine through invocations, prayers, songs, and rituals. An essential part of puja for the Hindu devotee is making a spiritual connection with the divine. Most often that contact is facilitated through an object: an element of nature, a sculpture, a vessel, a painting, or a print.

GLOSSARY AND PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Ramayana (Rahmah-yehneh)
The *Ramayana*, or the "goings" of Rama, may be likened to the *Odyssey* of Greek mythology in that it describes the adventures of a great warrior king, elevated in time to the status of a god. Rama, hero of the *Ramayana*, is the seventh incarnation of Vishnu.

reciprocity
Reciprocity, the process of giving and receiving, is an essential aspect of Hinduism. Hindus are taught that by giving, they receive, and that when they receive, they should respond with gifts. When a Hindu prays for a specific favor from a deity, he or she may vow to present a special gift to the god or goddess or to perform an arduous duty if the wish is granted.

rosary beads
The god Shiva often wears a rosary whose beads represent all time (past, present, and future) and its transcendence.

Sanskrit (SAN-skrit)
An ancient Indic language that is the classical language of India and of Hinduism.

Shiva (SHIV-ah)
The god Shiva, the Creator and Destroyer, is often shown with a cobra, the Naga, symbol of fertility and strength, wrapped around his neck. The god often has four arms, signifying his superhuman power.

Sita (SEE-tah)
Rama's beloved Sita, one of Lakshmi's many forms, is the traditional ideal Hindu woman: feminine, faithful, resilient, and pure.

symbol
A symbol is an object or a design that represents, or stands for, something else: a crown is a symbol of a king; a trident is a symbol of Shiva; a lotus is a symbol of Lakshmi.

three horizontal lines
The three horizontal lines often seen on Shiva's forehead represent three aspects of the divine: the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer. During puja, many devotees of Shiva mark their own foreheads with these three lines in sacred ash or sandalwood paste.

trishula (trish-OO-lah), or trident
A symbolic weapon used by deities to destroy demon foes. The *trishula* is an important symbol of Shiva and of the goddess Kali-Ma.

Vedas (Vay-dahs)
The earliest Hindu sacred literature, consisting of hymns, prayers, and liturgical formulas written in Sanskrit by Aryan people.

Vishnu (VISH-noo)
Vishnu, the Preserver, represents stability and order. Vishnu is recognized by the four symbols he carries: discus, conch, club, and lotus. In paintings and prints, Vishnu is often shown with blue skin, a device to accentuate his otherworldliness.

Vishnu's footprints
A V-shaped symbol is often shown on Vishnu's forehead, a stylized representation of his footprints. This same mark is applied in sandalwood paste to the foreheads of worshipers of Vishnu during puja.

yoni (YO-nee)
The yoni represents the feminine complement to Shiva's masculine divinity. Some people believe that the yoni, like the linga, derives its shape from sexual imagery, but to most Hindus it is simply an abstract symbol.

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General Textbooks

Elementary

✓ Bailey, Donna and Malcolm Rodgers. *India: Where We Live*. Austin, Tex.: Steck-Vaughn, 1990. ISBN 0-8114-2548-7. L.C. DS421.B19.

Illustrated story of a girl named Sita who describes her life in present-day Rajasthan.

Cumming, David. *India*. New York: Bookwright Press, 1989. ISBN 0-531-18271-1. L.C. DS407.C79.

Introduction to India, highlighting features that give it its particular character. Describes what it is like to live there today. Glossary. Bibliography.

Kalman, Bobbie. *India, the Culture*. The Lands, Peoples, and Cultures Series. New York: Crabtree Publishing Co., 1990. ISBN 0-86505-212-3. L.C. DS421.K34.

Discusses religion, the importance of the Ganges River, art, crafts, clothing, festivals, performing arts, and food. Glossary.

Kalman, Bobbie. *India, the Land*. The Lands, Peoples, and Cultures Series. New York: Crabtree Publishing Co., 1990. ISBN 0-86505-210-7. L.C. DS407.K35.

Describes geography, climate, rivers, people, village life, city life, farming and industry, transportation, and wildlife. Glossary.

Kalman, Bobbie. *India, the People*. The Lands, Peoples, and Cultures Series. New York: Crabtree Publishing Co., 1990. ISBN 0-86505-211-5. L.C. HN683.5.K35.

Discusses history up to modern times, people, family life, village life, city life, languages and education, occupations, and problems. Glossary.

Middle School

Allen, Carole. *India: Past, Present and Future*. Carthage, Ill.: Good Apple, 1993. ISBN 0-86653-739-2. Grades 4–8.

This social studies activity book guides students through an exploration of India's social and political past, present, and future. Topics investigated include the Indian economy, architecture, and geography.

✓ Isenberg, Irwin. *The Indian Subcontinent*. 4th ed. Scholastic World Cultures Series. New York: Scholastic, 1986. ISBN 0-590-34601-6.

Covers India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. Discusses the variations among these countries in village life, city life, the caste system, and religions. Each chapter is followed by review and discussion questions. Pronunciation guide. Accompanied by teaching guide that identifies and defines concepts and attitudes to be developed. Includes questions, discussion topics, and activities.

McNair, Sylvia. *India*. Enchantment of the World Series. Chicago: Childrens Press, 1990. ISBN 0-516-02719-0. L.C. DS407.M39.

Discusses India's geography, history up to independence, and people and culture.

✓ Nugent, Nicholas. *India*. World in View Series. Austin, Tex.: Steck-Vaughn, 1991. ISBN 0-8114-2441-3. L.C. DS407.N84.

Survey of the history, government, economy, natural resources, people, cultures, and future prospects of India.

High School

The Asia Society. *India: A Teacher's Guide*. Focus on Asian Studies. New York: The Asia Society, 1985. L.C. DS407.A7.

Teacher's guide to India. Includes classroom activities and student readings on caste, Hinduism, values, and marriage.

Clark, James I. *India Including Pakistan and Bangladesh*. Peoples & Cultures Series. Evanston, Ill.: McDougall & Littell, 1989. ISBN 0-8123-5779-5. L.C. DS437.K8. Accompanied by teacher's manual (ISBN 0-8123-5780-9) by Joan Curtis.

Covers ancient cities; Hindu gods; empire builders and invaders; India and the West; independence and partition; glimpses of Indian culture through its literature; and city and village life. Student guide directs attention to important concepts in each chapter. Teacher's manual provides summaries of main points, suggestions for discussions and activities, and map exercises. Includes tests and a list of resource materials, including audiovisual aids.

Jensen, Anne Ferguson. *India: Its Culture and People*. New York: Longman, 1991. ISBN 0-8013-0343-5. L.C. DS423.J43.

Covers geography, climate, religions, and history up to independence. Glossary.

Wolpert, Stanley. *India*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991. ISBN 0-520-07783-0. L.C. DS407.W56.

Written by a UCLA historian of India. Concrete and detailed overview. Includes bibliographic references on environment, history, religion and philosophy, society, arts and sciences, and politics and foreign policy. Bibliography.

Art

K–12

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. *Color Me—Ganesha, the Elephant-Headed God*. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1986.

The drawings in this coloring book are based on details from objects in the Asian Art Museum.

Bellerophon Books. *A Coloring Book of Ancient India*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Bellerophon Books, 1989. ISBN 0-88388-135-7.

Many of the pictures in this coloring book are from ancient stone carvings, which were originally painted with beautiful colors. Some text explanations of the pictures.

J. Paul Getty Trust. *Arts in India*. Glenview, Ill.: Crystal Productions, 1994. ISBN 0-89236-315-0.

Five posters of Indian art objects; on the reverse is text to place each object in cultural context. Includes timeline, medium, discussion questions, and activities. Accompanied by a teacher's guide.

✓ High School

Blurton, T. Richard. *Hindu Art*. London: The British Museum Press for the Trustees of the British Museum, 1992. ISBN 0-7141-1442-1.

This full-color textbook provides an excellent overview of Hindu art. The survey provides an introduction to the Hindu temple architecture, sculpture, and painting of the Indian subcontinent over more than two thousand years.

✓ Huntington, Susan L. and John C. Huntington. *Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*. New York: Weatherhill, 1985. ISBN 0-8348-0183-3. L.C. N7301.H86.

An important reference tool for the serious student of Indian art, this text provides an in-depth look at the different periods of Hindu art beginning with pre-history.

Literature

Middle School

Godden, Rumer and Jon Godden. *Indian Dust*. London: MacMillan, 1989. ISBN 0-333-51871-3.

Stories set in the rice fields of Bengal, the streets of Calcutta, and the mountains of Kashmir explore themes of courage, love and faith, the coming of manhood, the worship of different gods, and the cultural clash between East and West.

Rana, Indi. *The Roller Birds of Rampur*. New York: Henry Holt, 1993. ISBN 0-8050-2670-3. L.C. PZ7.R149Ro. Grades 7–12.

Dropped by her English boyfriend because of his family's racism and faced with the arranged marriage of her Indian friend, an Indian teenager leaves England to return to India to find her identity.

High School

Markandaya, Kamala. *Nectar in a Sieve*. New York: Signet, 1982. ISBN 0-451-16836-4. L.C. P27.M3394.Ne3.

Story of a woman in India who never lost her faith in life or her love for her husband and children—despite her endless battle against relentless nature, changing times, and dire poverty.

Vimal, Ganga P. *The Talisman: Stories and Poems in Hindi and English*. London: Forest Books, 1990 (distributed in the U.S. by Dufour Editions, Chester Springs, Pa.). ISBN 0-948259-57-4.

Collection of Indian contemporary literature, short stories, and poems published in Hindi and English.

Hindu Stories

Elementary

Beach, Milo C. *The Adventures of Rama*. Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1983. ISBN 0-934686-51-3. L.C. 83-1473.

Astonishing creatures and colorful characters appear in this shortened version of the tales of Rama. Lavishly illustrated with paintings from the Freer Gallery of Art.

✓ Hull, Robert. *Indian Stories Retold by Robert Hull*. New York: Thomson Learning, 1994. ISBN 1-56847-189-0. L.C. PZ8.1.H883In.

Collection of eight traditional tales from India, including "Shiva Goes Fishing" and "How Ganga Came Down to Earth." Glossary. Bibliography.

Shepard, Aaron. *Savitri: A Tale of Ancient India*. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman & Co., 1992. ISBN 0-8075-7251-9. L.C. BL1138.4.S28S44. Grades 3–6.

Retelling of a classic tale of courage, love, wit, and will from India's national epic, the *Mahabharata*. Full-page illustrations reflect visual elements of Indian art.

✓ Middle School

✓ Chatterjee, Debjani. *The Elephant-Headed God and Other Hindu Tales*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. ISBN 0-19-598112-9. L.C. BL1111.2C43.

Collection of twelve traditional tales of ancient India. Stories of gods and goddesses, kings and queens, heroes and beggars, angelic beings and demons contain much of the enduring wisdom of India.

✓ Dalal-Clayton, Diksha. *The Adventures of Young Krishna, the Blue God of India*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. ISBN 0-19-508113-7. L.C. BL1220.D34.

Collection of the adventures of the Hindu god Krishna beginning with the story of his birth and his escape as a baby from his cruel uncle. These tales illustrate the eternal battle between good and evil. Glossary. List of gods and goddesses.

Rao, Shanta Rameshwar. *The Children's Mahabharata*. Hyderabad: Orient Longmans Ltd., 1989. ISBN 0-86131-266-X. L.C. BL1138.22.R37.

Indian national epic tells the story of the warrior princes, called the Kauravas and the Pandavas, who lived in India centuries ago. It tells of their rivalries and their adventures and of the great war they fought on the field of Kurukshetra.

High School

Ions, Veronica. *Indian Mythology*. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1983. ISBN 0-911745-55-6. L.C.BL2003.16.

Discusses Indian religion and history, early deities, and mythologies of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Bibliography.

Hinduism

Elementary

✓ Bennett, Olivia. *Holi, Hindu Festival of Spring*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987. ISBN 0-241-11986-3. L.C. BL1239.82.H65.

With text and pictures tells how English children experience the Hindu festival of Holi.

✓ Mitchell, Pratima. *Dance of Shiva, an Introduction to Bharata Natyam*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1989. ISBN 0-241-12550-2.

Text and photographs of girls learning traditional Indian "Dance of Shiva."

✓ Solomon, Joan. *Sweet-Tooth Sunil*. The Way We Live Series. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984. ISBN 0-241-11201-X.

Tells the story of Divali, the Hindu Festival of Light, through the eyes of Sunil.

Middle School

✓ Kadodwala, Dilip. *Hinduism*. World Religions Series. New York: Thomson Learning, 1995. ISBN 1-568-47-377-X. L.C. BL1203.K33. Grades 5–7.

Introduction to important beliefs and rituals. Examples and case studies from a variety of perspectives emphasizing Hinduism's vitality in today's culture all over the world. Glossary.

✓ Wangu, Madhu Bazaz. *Hinduism*. World Religion Series. New York: Facts on File, 1991. ISBN 0-8160-2447-2. L.C. BL1203.W35.

Discusses the modern Hindu world, the growth of Hinduism, the gods and devotionalism, political changes and their influence on Hinduism, the Hindu temple, icons and worship, and modern Hinduism. Glossary. Bibliography.

High School

Eck, Diana L. *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*. 2d rev. ed. Chambersburg, Pa.: Anima Publications, 1985. ISBN 0-89012-042-0. L.C. BL1205.E25.

Darsan, or *darshan*, is a Sanskrit word meaning "seeing." Guide to seeing the divine in Indian sculpture, temples, symbols, times, and places.

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco
Education Department
Golden Gate Park
San Francisco, CA 94118
Contact: Richard Mellott, Head of Education
Telephone: (415) 668-8921/8922
Fax: (415) 668-8928

Publishes materials for teachers as well as offering tours and programs for teachers. Teachers can also acquire hands-on teaching kits and videos through the museum. Contact the Education Department to receive its annual newsletter.

Asia Society
725 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10021
Contact: Education Department
Telephone: (212) 288-6400
Fax: (212) 517-8315

Publishes curriculum materials on Asia. Contact the Education Department for a complete catalogue.

Bala Books
12520 Kirkham Court, #7
Poway, CA 92064
Contact: Philip Gallelli, Director
Telephone: (800) 679-2252
Fax: (619) 679-6908

Carries a short list of folk tales, religious stories, and cookbooks. Children's books, videocassettes, audiocassettes, and posters are also available.

Center for Asian Studies
University of Texas at Austin
W.C. Hogg Building 4.132 (G9300)
Austin, TX 78712-1194
Contact: Yvette Rosser
Telephone: (512) 471-5811
Fax: (512) 471-4469
E-mail address:
outreach @uts.cc.utexas.edu

Has the following materials available for loan: videos, both feature films and documentaries; slides (some include scripts, readings, teacher's notes, fact sheets, or map); and curriculum materials. Requests for materials must be sent two weeks in advance with an alternate date. Materials must be returned within four weeks.

Center for South Asian Studies Program
Jackson School of International Studies
University of Washington at Seattle
303 Thompson Hall
University of Washington, DR-05
Seattle, WA 98195
Contact: Maureen Haley Tarada, Asst. Director and Outreach Coordinator
Telephone: (206) 543-4800
Fax: (206) 685-0668
E-mail address:
tarada@u.washington.edu

This program is supported by the U.S. Department of Education and is responsible for academic programs related to South Asia at the University of Washington. It sponsors a variety of outreach programs in the community.

Center for South Asian Studies
University of California at Berkeley
201 Moses Hall
Berkeley, CA 94720-2310
Contact: Simona Sawhney, Outreach Coordinator
Telephone: (510) 642-3608
Fax: (510) 643-5793
E-mail address:
csas@uclink.berkeley.edu

Offers the South Asia Resource Directory for K–12 Teachers (listings of resources for teaching about South Asia).

Center for South Asian Studies
University of Virginia
110 Minor Hall
Charlottesville, VA 22903
Contact: Cindy Benton-Groner, Outreach Coordinator
Telephone: (804) 924-8815
E-mail address:
csas@faraday.clas.virginia.edu

Has an extensive list of films and videos available on loan, as well as a resource list on contemporary India. Distributes the South Asia Resource Directory for K–12 Teachers.

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RESOURCES FOR TEACHING ABOUT INDIA AND HINDUISM

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Metropolitan Museum of Art
Uris Library and Resource Center
1000 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10028-0198
Contact: John D'Addario, Assistant, Teacher Programs, Education
Telephone: (212) 650-2756
Fax: (212) 570-3972

Has materials available for two-week loan free of charge. Must be picked up in person. Teacher packets include: South Asia, Glorification of the Goddess in India, The Ramayana, and The Story of Krishna.

Nataraj Books
7073 Brookfield Plaza
Springfield, VA 22150
Contact: Vinnie Mahajan
Telephone: (703) 455-4996
Fax: (703) 912-9052

Major national distributor of books about and from India. Excellent source of specialized books including Indian comic book versions of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, posters and postcards of deities, and books of Hindu prayers. Sends out monthly catalogues.

South Asia Gopher
304 International Affairs
Columbia University
420 West 118th Street
New York, NY 10027-7296
Contact: David Magier, South Asia Librarian
Telephone: (212) 854-8046
Fax: (212) 854-2495
E-mail address:
magier@columbia.edu

The South Asia Gopher (SAG) is a collection of worldwide network-accessible information resources relating to South Asia. Offers bibliographic resources, links with other South Asia–related online resources worldwide, South Asia teaching resources, etc. The URL is gopher://gopher.cc.columbia.edu:71/11/clioplus/scholarly/South Asia. Or you may gopher to <gopher.cc.columbia.edu.71> and then navigate down through the menus as follows: CLIOPlus/SELECTED TOPICS.../South Asia. Or you may telnet to <columbianet.columbia.edu>.

South Asia Program
Cornell University
170 Uris Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853
Contact: Durga Bor
Telephone: (607) 255-8493
Fax: (607) 254-5000

Video lending library has sixty VHS videocassettes about South Asia available for educational purposes free of charge. Subjects include city life, dance, Buddhism, music, history, Hinduism, etc. Also offers an outreach program to schools in the Ithaca area.

South Asia Regional Studies
University of Pennsylvania
820 Williams Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6305
Contact: Robert Young
Telephone: (215) 898-7475
E-mail address:
dludden@sas.upenn.edu

Contact Dr. Young for a listing of materials available.

Southern Asia Institute
Columbia University
420 West 118th Street
New York, NY 10027
Contact: Barbara Gombach, Assistant Director
Telephone: (212) 854-3616
Fax: (212) 854-6987
E-mail address:
bcg2@columbia.edu

Provides K–12 teaching resources. For a listing of materials available, write to this address, or use the South Asia Gopher (see above).

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